

# Corporate Parenting Strategy

2023 - 2028



# Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction – Our strategy	6
The Cambridgeshire County Council Vision	7
Conditions for success	8
Priorities	9
Priority one	10
Priority two	13
Priority three	15
Priority four	18
Priority five	21
Our vision	24
The Corporate Parenting Principles	25
Our approach	26
Context in Cambridgeshire	28
The Cambridgeshire Promise and Pledge	34
Promises	35
Care Leavers' Pledge	36
Governance structure and accountability	37
What is good Corporate Parenting?	39
Care leavers – Protected Characteristics	40
Taking the strategy forward	41



# Foreword

A message from our children and young people to their Corporate Parents

## Dear Corporate Parents

We're all born as children, so we believe we should be treated as equal to others who aren't in care. We're all just children with the simple ambition to live a normal life. We deserve the opportunities to reach our potential and become the independent and successful young adults we know we can be.

The future will look different for all of us, and we'll need support tailored to our individual needs. We want you to be ambitious with us and not limit our potential. Even when we're doing well, you should be aiming for the absolute best for us, not just in education, but in anything that we enjoy, whether that's sports, social activities, other hobbies and in all areas of our lives.

### Children in Care

## Dear Corporate Parents

We'll need extra support to develop the required skills to live independently and have long term financial stability, but we know that with a clear plan for the future, the right guidance and a shared ambition, this is more than achievable.

### Care Leavers

# Foreword

## **A message from Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair of Children and Young People Committee**

We commit as corporate parents to support our children in care to ensure that they can have experiences and opportunities while living in caring, safe homes just as other young people do.

We take our responsibility as corporate parents seriously and this does not stop for us once adulthood is reached. We commit to support all those in Cambridgeshire who had experience in care.

To assist them to reach their potential in employment, relationships, leisure. We are ambitious for all our young people and care leavers and want to support them to reach their ambitions and celebrate their accomplishments.

## **A message from Councillor Anna Bradnam, Chair of Corporate Parenting Sub Committee.**

Here in Cambridgeshire our children, young people and families are at the heart of everything we do. We want you to feel safe and secure, to thrive and aim high. We will encourage you to learn the skills you need to move into employment and live a happy and independent life. We will provide the stability, love and care you need to achieve your ambitions. We are proud of you and will celebrate your achievements. We promise to listen to you, to acknowledge how you feel and support you.

This Corporate Parenting Strategy explains our commitments to you, your family and to those who work with you while you develop into independence.

This Strategy is for you, and we will always welcome and listen to any feedback you have about this document or our services. We commit to improving the service so that you and your family and those who care for you have all the support they need. We want our children and young people to feel safe and cared-for, from childhood to adulthood.



# Foreword

A message from our Executive Director, Martin Purbrick



One of Cambridgeshire County Councils ambitions is for “children and young people to have opportunities to thrive”.

An important measure of this ambition will be in how well the County Council can support the children, young people and families facing greatest challenges in their childhood, and how well we care for the children and young people we look after and those who have left that care to start their adult lives.

Cambridgeshire is a widely diverse County with beautiful countryside and large towns and cities. It has huge resources through the businesses, services, communities and voluntary organisations across the area. We should be able to provide the very best care and opportunities to the children who have been disadvantaged or experienced trauma early in their lives.

We want to ensure that outcomes for children in our care whether that is in education, in health, in work and in their wellbeing are just as good as their peers. Working to reduce these inequalities is a priority and providing good quality care that is designed to meet the individual needs of each of the children we care for will provide them with a solid platform to learn, grow and be independent.

This strategy will support the children in our care or are care experienced and ensure that as corporate parents, we support them all to achieve the best possible outcomes in life.

# Introduction – Our strategy

## A warm welcome to the Cambridgeshire Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2028

Corporate parenting is about everyone – elected members, council colleagues, and partner agencies – working together to provide the best support and protection for children in care. In Cambridgeshire County Council, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee brings everyone with Corporate Parenting responsibilities together, creating a welcoming space for our children, foster carers, and care leavers. Here, they can openly discuss and influence the entire range of services available to children and young people.

This strategy outlines our priorities for supporting our children in care and care leavers and establishes a framework that holds the council and their partners accountable for their promises and pledges. The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee will diligently monitor our commitment delivery. Members will actively listen to young people, ensuring their happiness, health, access to quality education, and opportunities for training and employment. Additionally, it ensures they have a home to go to when the time comes to live independently.

Our relational approach involves direct and routine engagement with children, their carers, and social workers, encouraging them to share experiences. This enables us to better understand the challenges they face and adapt services to meet their needs. Young people regularly provide feedback through statutory reviews, the Young Inspectors report, and the Children in Care Council/Voice.

Children’s experiences always form the core of our approach in Cambridgeshire County Council, with the strategy's foundations set in consultation with our children and young people. Our priorities directly respond to The Cambridgeshire Promise, a list of commitments co-developed and endorsed by young people and endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. We have further improved this by introducing our Pledges to care leavers.

In Cambridgeshire we have a diverse group of children who we are responsible to ensure that they reach their full potential in line with their aspirations and goals. We are proud to have such a diverse group of children in our care and actively encourage everyone to feel confident and proud of who they are. Regardless of circumstances or characteristics, all our children and young people will receive complete support to make every success of their lives.

At Cambridgeshire County Council, we understand that each child and young person has a unique history and vision for the future. This strategy seeks to ensure that their vision becomes a reality. Every child must be supported to reach their full potential, with no one left behind.

# The Cambridgeshire County Council Vision

Our Councillors and colleagues across Cambridgeshire are committed to

**“Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire”**



We will deliver this vision by being closer to our communities, partners and residents, so that Cambridgeshire can become greener, fairer and more caring in the ways that are most suitable to the variety of people and communities we serve.

To do this we have SEVEN ambitions:

## Ambition 1

Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes

## Ambition 2

Travel across the county is safer and more sustainable

## Ambition 3

Health inequalities are reduced

## Ambition 4

People enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs

## Ambition 5

People are helped out of poverty and income inequality

## Ambition 6

Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised

## Ambition 7

Children and young people have opportunities to thrive

# Conditions for success in achieving ambitions for our children

We will achieve our ambitions by:

- Demonstrating strong leadership and implementing rigorous performance management.
- Continuing to involve and engage children and young people, in shaping and executing our strategy.
- Frequently asking our children and young people for their opinion to ensure we are staying true to our commitment.
- Fostering inclusive and efficient collaboration within Cambridgeshire County Council, supported by designated elected member, partners and front-line colleagues to be champions for each priority theme.





# Priorities

Cambridgeshire has worked closely with our children and young people to establish priorities that reflect their voices and perspectives.

To achieve our vision of being strong corporate parents, we have co-developed the following five refreshed priorities in partnership with the children, young people, and the trusted adults in their lives.

## Priority one

Children in our care who have experienced our services that we provide have an active role in care planning and contribute to the development of our services.

## Priority two

Children and young people are placed in stable homes built with love where they feel a sense of safety and belonging.

## Priority three

We will ensure all aspects of health and wellbeing of children in our care are prioritised. We will help our children and young people maintain positive mental health and ensure they receive timely support when needed.

## Priority four

Children and young people are supported to succeed in education, employment and training in line with their aspirations.

## Priority five

Children and young people who have experienced our care are supported to get ready for the world of work and become active members of society. We will ensure that young people are ready to be independent.



# Priority One

## Voice of our children and young people

Children in our care who have experienced our services that we provide have an active role in care planning and contribute to the development of shaping future services.

You said...

We want the feedback that we provide to make a difference

We want to know how this will happen

We want to know how our voice can be used to influence change

We will...

- Make sure that children feel involved in decision making about their lives through the child's journey.
- Increase the number of children who participate and attend the Children in Care Council.
- Increase young people's knowledge and understanding of why care planning is so important and how they can influence decisions that affect their lives.
- Facilitate opportunities for young people to chair the Young People's Corporate Parenting Meeting and influence how we deliver services to children.
- Support members of the Children in Care Council to deliver training to our Foster Carers.
- Support our children and young people to participate in the recruitment and selection of senior managers.

# Priority One

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You said...

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We want to know how this will happen

We want to know how our voice can be used to influence change

We will...

- Support our young people who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to share their voice and work with both local and external services to better meet their needs.
- Develop the use of social media platforms to consult children and young people, capture their voice, and produce a report of their feedback to influence change.
- Support and encourage the voice of young people to influence on how we commission services for them.
- Work collaboratively with young people to ensure they influence the creation of important documents that will support preparation for independence.
- Provide activities through our Virtual School to share support services available to children and young people and hear their views around education support.

# Priority One

## Voice of our children and young people

Children in our care who have experienced our services that we provide have an active role in care planning and contribute to the development of our future services.

### What will success look like?

- Implement the Care Leavers Pledge which has been co-produced with young people.
- Audit activity to ensure the voice of the child has been recorded and acted upon where possible.
- The Bright Spots Survey will provide an overview of our children's voice to aid planning.
- Utilising the Young People's Corporate Parenting Meeting to influence change.
- All children are provided with a copy of the promise and understand our commitment.
- All care leavers understand and encouraged to provide feedback on the delivery of our pledge.
- Review the % of children providing feedback.

### Who will this be delivered by?

The Participation team, the Virtual School, the Children in Care team, the Care Leavers team, the Independent Reviewing Officer Service, the Youth Offending Service, the Family Support and Safeguarding team and the Fostering Service.

# Priority Two

## Achieving permanent homes for our children with good quality care

Children and young people are placed in stable homes built with love where they feel a sense of safety and belonging.

### You said...

We want to know when we are moving, and where we are moving to as soon as this information is available

We want the homes to be referred to when discussing where we live and see the wording when recording information about us

We would like to have as much information as possible about the home that we will be moving to

We would like to know why we must move

We want to know why we cannot live with our family and siblings

### We will...

- Increase the number of in house foster carers so children can live locally in Cambridgeshire.
- Hold family group conferences/network meetings to support children to have family time and consider reunification plans timely.
- Ensure that we secure permanent homes for children at the earliest opportunity.
- Work towards stepping children out of residential care to a family setting at the right time.
- Open two children's homes in Cambridgeshire by 2026 to enable children to remain local to family.
- Provide care leavers with good quality care and support to promote the development of independence skills for the future.
- Have two lifelong people supporting young people when they leave our care.

# Priority Two

## Achieving permanent homes for our children with good quality care

Children and young people are placed in stable homes built with love where they feel a sense of safety and belonging.

### What will success look like?

- Children are placed in stable placements at the earliest opportunity. The statutory performance measures will evidence this through our placement stability performance.
- We will place children locally in Cambridgeshire where it is suitable and in their best interest.
- We will hold stability meetings to prevent home environments from breaking down.
- We will improve our fostering recruitment campaign by strengthening local connections to increase the number of local carers joining our Cambridge Fostering Service.
- We will capture the feedback of children's experiences of moving homes through reviews and pathway planning.

### Who will this be delivered by?

The Fostering Service, the Commissioning and Placements team, the Children in Care team, the Care Leavers Service, the Housing team, and the Family Support and Safeguarding team.



# Priority Three

## Physical and mental health and wellbeing

We will ensure all aspects of health and wellbeing of children in our care are prioritised. We will help our children and young people maintain positive mental health and ensure they receive timely support when needed.

### You said...

We would like to know what support is available to us to support our health needs

We would like you to explain why we need health checks and other appointments

We want to understand what support is available to us to support our mental health

We want to be supported and encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and emotional wellbeing

### We will...

- Ensure an Initial Health Assessment is undertaken within four weeks of entering care.
- Ensure that Annual Health Review Assessments are completed on time and annually.
- Ensure that health assessments are discussed and explained to children by their carers/support worker.
- To understand the effects of traumatic lived experiences, race and identity on mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensure that advice, guidance and support is provided to young people where there is a health need identified and access services and support.
- Ensure that the right support and services are accessed timely where there is a disability identified.
- Ensure that Child And Adolescent Mental Health Services and therapeutic support are provided to meet needs.

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We want to be supported and encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and emotional wellbeing

### We will...

- Ensure that young people have access to information about age-appropriate drugs and sexual health to them keep safe.
- Ensure that any information needed to keep children healthy will be recorded in their care plan and pathway plan (reviewed every six months).
- Ensure that information on important health matters will be shared with children.
- Support children and young people to access better health support in line with the recommendations from your Review Health Assessment post 18.
- Identify children and young people aged 14-25 who are not already known to mental health professional and disability services to ensure they access the support they need.



# Priority Three

## Physical and mental health and wellbeing

We will ensure all aspects of health and wellbeing of children in our care are prioritised. We will help our children and young people maintain positive mental health and ensure they receive timely support when needed.

### What will success look like?

- We will use the outcomes from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to inform us on how we can better support children and young people with their mental health in collaboration with education and health.
- Improvement in the key performance data in health assessments.
- The number of children that are provided support for their emotional wellbeing timely either directly or through the carers.

### Who will this be delivered by?

Public Health colleagues, the Clinical team, the Children in Care team, the Care Leavers Service, the Youth Offending Service, the Virtual School, the Family Support and Safeguarding team, and the Fostering Service.



# Priority Four

## Education, training and employment (EET)

Children and young people are supported to succeed in education, employment and training in line with their aspirations.

### You said...

We want you to support us to access opportunities that interest us

We want you to be aspirational Corporate Parents and encourage us to achieve beyond our potential

We want you to support us to be ready for the world of employment and our future

We want you to celebrate with us when we do well

We want you to ensure that we are supporting to prepare for the planning of the Personal Education Plan meeting

### We will...

- Aim to ensure that children are placed in a good or outstanding rated school.
- Ensure that know who their designated teacher is to support them at school.
- Ensure that children are provided with the right support to enable them to thrive in education.
- Ensure that regular Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings are held and that the wishes and views of children are listened to, and their achievements celebrated.
- Ensure that future educational planning is in line with your aspirations.
- Support children to access mental health support where a high Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire score is identified.
- Make an application for an Education Health Care Plan to be completed and access the necessary support timely where special educational needs or a disability is identified.
- Aim to develop a work experience opportunity in line with aspirations and goals.

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We want you to celebrate with us when we do well

We want you to ensure that we are supporting to prepare for the planning of the Personal Education Plan meeting

### We will...

- Increase the apprentice offer for care leavers reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training.
- Support young people to present at the Education Employment and Training Empowerment Forum to access opportunities in line with their aspirations.
- Support young people should they want to go to university.
- Support our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people to access good quality education opportunities to enhance their language skills.
- Support children to have minimal changes in their education where possible.
- Work with the Virtual School to ensure that there is a good understanding of trauma and attachment so that children's social and mental health needs can be understood in education settings to provide stability and support.

# Priority Four

## Education, training and employment (EET)

Children and young people are supported to succeed in education, employment and training in line with their aspirations.

### What will success look like?

- Hearing more about children and young people's experience in education through surveys and direct communication.
- More young people given the opportunity to access apprenticeships within the council.
- Children's feedback from their experience at school via their Personal Education Plans (PEP).
- Review of the number of children who have access services via the Education, Employment and Training (EET) Empowerment Forum.
- Increase the number of young people accessing education, training and employment.
- Review the timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) completion for children with additional needs and require support.
- Drive the agenda of care leavers as a protective characteristic in line with the council's commitment.

### Who will this be delivered by?

The Virtual School, Public Health colleagues, the Family Support and Safeguarding team, the Children in Care team, the Youth Offending Service, the Leaving Care Service, the Fostering Service, EET coordinators, and HR colleagues.

# Priority Five

## Preparation for independence

Children and young people who have experienced our care are supported to get ready for the world of work and become active members of society. We will ensure that young people are ready to be independent.

### You said...

We would like to know more from care leavers about their experiences

We would like to be supported to prepare for independence when we feel ready

We want to learn about becoming financially independent and understand the importance of wants and needs

We would like you to support is to access work experience opportunities to prepare for the world of work

### We will...

- Ensure young people are supported by their Personal Advisor from aged 17 and a half to help them plan for the future.
- Prepare 'preparation for independence' booklets with young people to ensure we are supporting their development from the age of 14.
- Support young people to access preparation for independence training via the library services.
- Create forums for care leavers to share their experiences of living independently and the transition post 18 years.
- Support young people to access work experience.
- Support young people with writing their CV.
- Support young people to access hobbies and interests in line with their care and pathway plan.

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### We will...

- Support young people to access support in managing their money and becoming financially independent.
- Ensure young people understand the Local Offer and how to access support.
- Ensure that young people understand all the options available to them for post 18 (e.g., staying put, university, supported accommodation, and private rental/tenancy via local housing providers).



# Priority Five

## Preparation for independence

Children and young people who have experienced our care are supported to get ready for the world of work and become active members of society. We will ensure that young people are ready to be independent.

### What will success look like?

- Our young people feel better supported in understanding their future options about homes.
- Our young people feel better prepared for the transition post-18.
- More children placed under staying put arrangements post-18.
- Our placements stability data will evidence improvements.
- More young people living locally in Cambridgeshire in their own tenancies.
- Children and young people can identify two important people to be lifelong connections.
- Drive the agenda for Care leavers being a protected characteristic and provide opportunities across the partnership.

### Who will this be delivered by?

The Leaving Care Service, the Virtual School, the Children in Care team, the Fostering Service, Public Health colleagues, the Housing team, the Placements team, and the Participation team.

# Our Vision

Cambridgeshire County Council is dedicated to being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent, demonstrated through our passion to strive for the best outcomes for children through our actions. Our commitment is to ensure that our care-experienced children are well-prepared for life.

We are loving parents who care deeply about our children and young people. We will provide the same standard of care as any good parent, maintaining high aspirations and being strong advocates for our children. We will equip our carers with the skills needed to support our children to live fulfilling, successful, and rewarding lives, filled with love.

We will take bold and innovative steps to ensure that carers who are privileged to parent our children have the right training, support, knowledge, and skills that our children need and deserve to reach their full potential and beyond.





# The Corporate Parenting Principles

In 2017 the Children and Social Work Act introduced a set of Corporate Parenting Principles for our children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25 that underpin everything we do and are referenced below.

Act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of our children and young people.

Encourage our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

Consider the views, wishes and feelings of our children and young people.

Help our children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.

Promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for our children and young people.

Be safe, have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.

Prepare our children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

# Our approach

Cambridgeshire County Council's overarching approach will include:

- **Prevention and Early Intervention** – we prioritise prevention and early intervention to support children and families, giving them every opportunity to stay together. If care becomes necessary, we will explore options for children to live with wider family and friends' networks whenever possible.
- **Children and young people's voices** – the voices of children and young people will support to shape our service design, delivery, and evaluation, including democratic decision-making processes.
- **Family first** – wherever safe and possible, children and young people should live with their families. We will ensure that only those who genuinely need to be in care are placed in our care.
- **Corporate Parenting shared responsibility** – ensuring good outcomes for children in care and care leavers is a responsibility shared by the entire Cambridgeshire County Council and its partners.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – we will always strive to promote the physical and mental wellbeing of our children and young people.
- **Good quality homes** – we will strive to ensure each child has access to the best quality homes that meet each child's needs and offer stability.
- **Education access** – children in care have the right to access the best education possible and the support they need to reach their full potential and beyond.
- **Permanence and belonging** – we will secure permanence and a sense of belonging for children, supporting, and strengthening the relationships that matter to them and helping them stay connected to those they love throughout their childhood and into adulthood.
- **Support for independence** – we will ensure that children from the age of 14 years are supported to develop their independence skills to prepare for adulthood.

This strategy is part of a comprehensive effort to enhance provision for children in care and care leavers, encompassing:

- **Our co-produced Promise** – a commitment to children in care.
- **Our co-produced Pledge** - commitment to care leavers, along with a local offer for care leavers.
- **Our Framework 2023-2028** - outlining the Council's long-term vision for Cambridgeshire, with a real focus on reducing health inequalities, ensuring safety, and providing opportunities for children and young people to thrive in every aspect of their care.
- **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee** – a meeting chaired by Members to review the progress of how services are delivered to children and young people.
- **Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum** - ensuring that the voices of young people remain central to our work.
- **Corporate Parenting Annual Report** - owned by the Corporate Parenting Services and presented to committee meetings.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027** creating a more inclusive, caring, and greener supportive environment for all residents of Cambridgeshire.
- **The Virtual School** - collaborating with schools, colleges, training providers, education settings, and children's social care to improve educational outcomes.
- **Joint Housing Protocol for Young People 2023 - 2024** - includes the pathway dedicated to preventing homelessness for our young people.
- **Corporate Parenting Responsibilities** –ensure these are embedded in our induction for all colleagues and applicable policies, strategies, and commissioning arrangements.
- **Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy** – a whole community approach to improving mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people.
- **Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2024** - outlining how we will deliver the range and number of high-quality placements needed by children in care and care leavers.



# Context in Cambridgeshire

From December 2023

As of December 2023, Cambridgeshire had:



**661**  
Children  
in Care

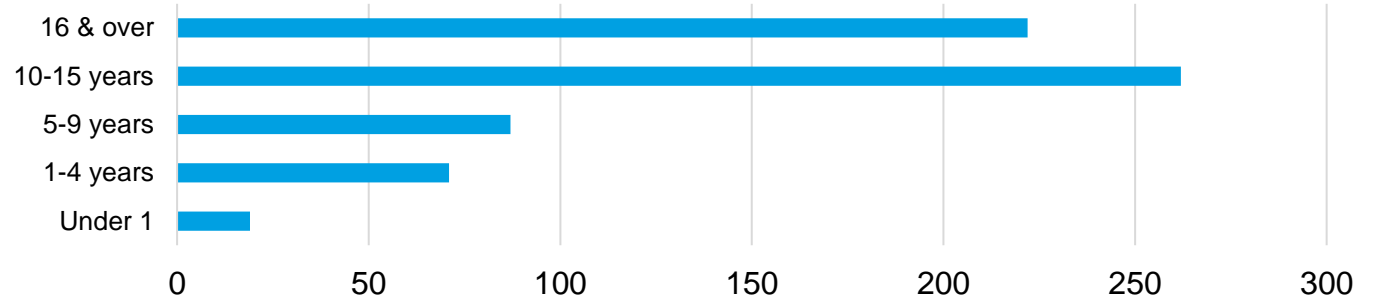


**403**  
were  
male

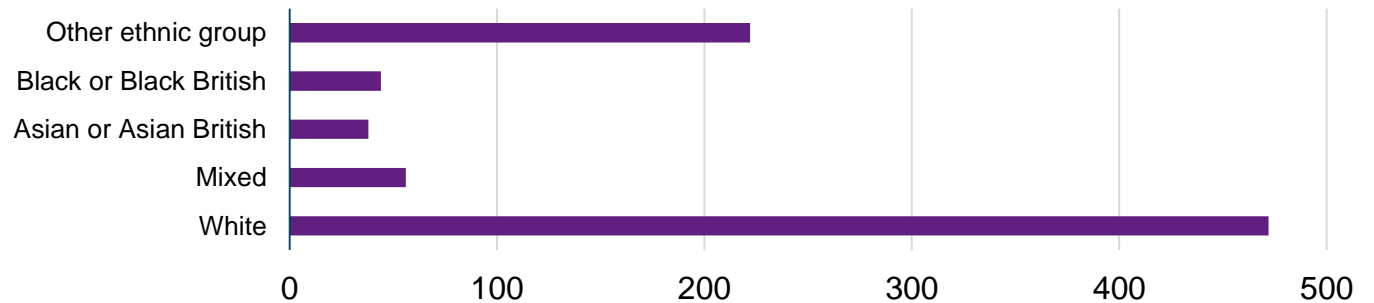


**258**  
were  
female

Children in Care – breakdown by age



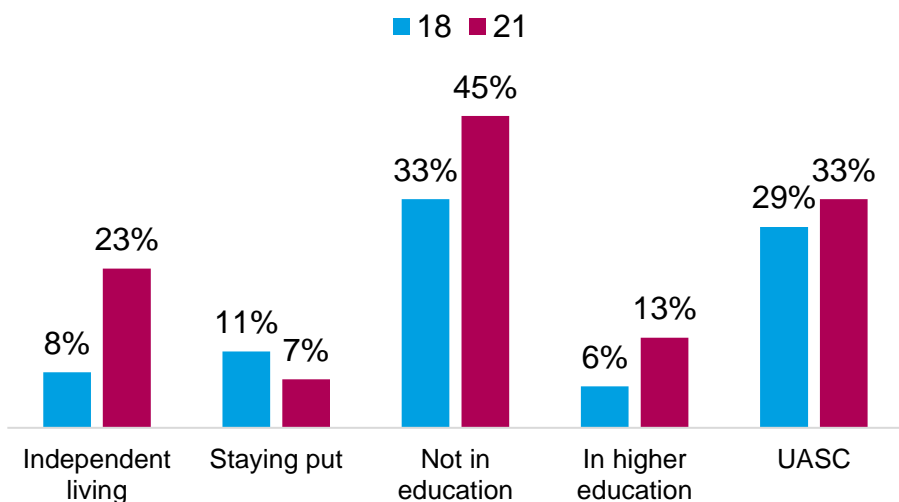
Children in Care – breakdown by ethnicity



# Context for care leavers

From December 2023 for Cambridgeshire County Council care leavers (aged 18 to 21)

## Care leavers (aged 18 to 21)



## Ethnic background

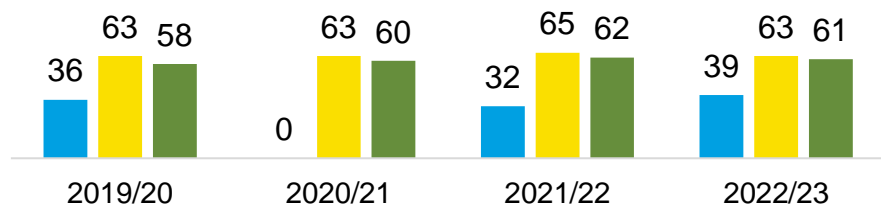
White	49%
Mixed	6%
Asian or Asian British	8%
Black or black British	18%
Other ethnic group	18%

57 (8%) care leavers have a disability

## Remain with former foster carer

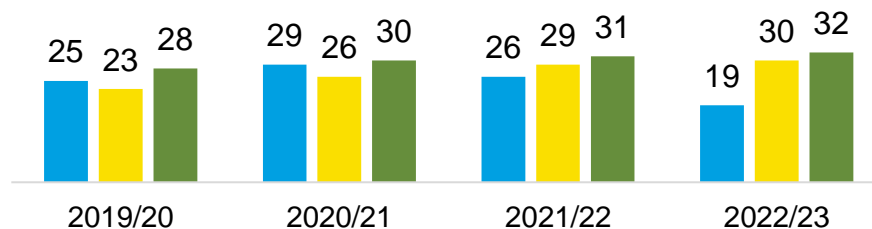
### Aged 18

LA SNs Eng



### Aged 19 to 20

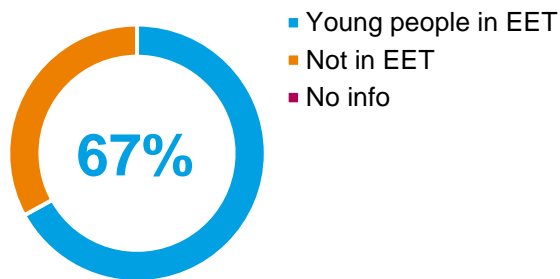
LA SNs Eng



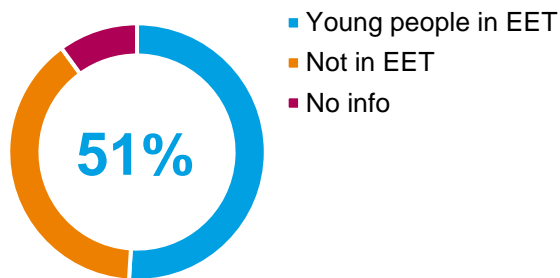
# Care Leavers activity

## Education, Employment or Training (EET)

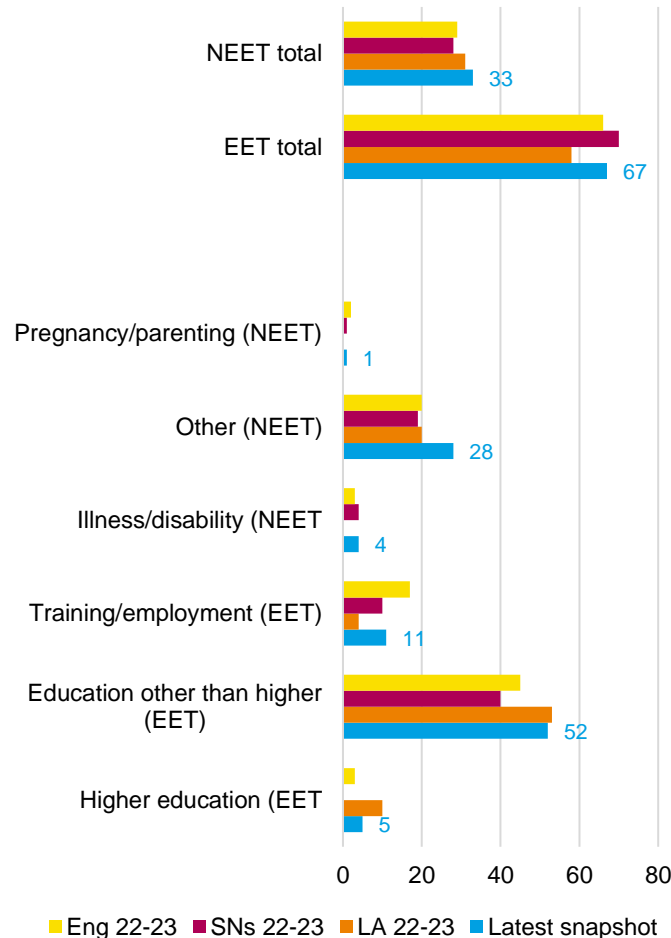
### Education, Employment or Training (EET) of 17 to 18 year olds



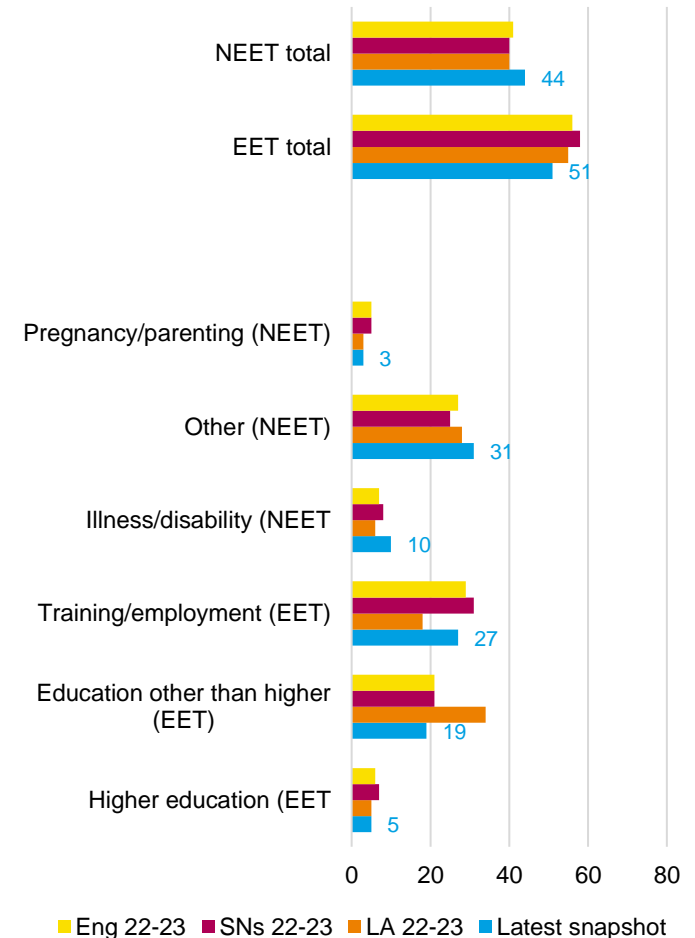
### Education, Employment or Training (EET) of 19 to 21 year olds



### Activity types of 17 to 18 year olds



### Activity types of 19 to 21 year olds





# Cambridgeshire homes

Where our children and young people live – from December 2023



**454**

children were living with foster carers

**68%** of children in care aged under 16 (who have been looked after for two years or more), in the same placement for at least two years



**61** children were living in residential care homes

**459**

children have had the same placement for 12 months



**14** children were placed for adoption





# Children and young people's health

From December 2023



**43%** of children in care had an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of coming into care



**46%**

of children in care had an up-to-date dental check

**67%** of children in care have an up-to-date SDQ



**75%** of children in care have had an Annual Health Assessment





# Children and young people's education

From December 2023



Personal Education Plan compliance was **98.2%** for September 2023 to December 2023

We have **80%** of children of statutory school age attending good or outstanding schools



We had **11** students achieve five GCSEs at grade 4+ representing **20.7%** of our overall cohort



# The Cambridgeshire Promise and Pledge

This strategy sits alongside our promise to children and young people in our care along with the newly co-produced pledge for our care leavers.

The Cambridgeshire Promise and Pledge is a set of commitments created by young people and decision-makers in children's services to guarantee that all our children in care and care leavers receive the appropriate services and support.

As corporate parents, we aim to help our young people achieve their best and succeed in life. We promise to review each commitment annually through the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee, providing opportunities for children, young people, and corporate parents to evaluate our performance in line with our agreed priorities.



# Promises

## to our Children in Care

1) We will work to keep you safe and help you to keep yourself safe

2) We will do everything we can to make you feel cared about, valued, and respected as an individual



7) We will help you to see your family, friends and other people who are important to you. If there are people can't support you to see, we will explain why

3) We will be honest with you and explain if we are unable to do something we said we would do. We will not make unrealistic promises to you

4) We will involve you in decision making so your views are listened to, and will explain when we make a decision you may not like or agree with

8) We will support you to achieve your goals and reach your potential in your education, hobbies and interests

9) We will work with you to give you all the help and support you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life



5) We will work to keep you in a supportive and caring environment where you can feel safe and happy

6) We will support you to maintain a healthy lifestyle and help look after your physical and mental health

10) We will make sure you have the up-to-date information you need, including who is working with you and how to give us your views or ask us for help



# Care Leavers Pledge

We are ambitious and optimistic about what you can achieve. We will nurture your aspirations and dreams by providing an easily accessible, up to date and inspiring Care Leaver Local Offer to enable you to reach your potential.

Our Care Experience Network have told us the following are the most important issues for our young people:



## Education and employment

We will work with local colleges, universities and employers to make sure you have access to courses and opportunities so that you can achieve your potential in education and work.



## Finances

We will support you to develop the skills you will need to be financially stable.



## Health

We will ensure that you understand the physical and mental health services available to you and how to access them. We will work with health professionals to help them understand the needs of care experienced young people and to offer services to meet those needs.



## Housing

When the time is right, we will work closely with housing providers to make sure you receive the support you need to find a suitable property that you can truly call home.



To help with this we will provide you with a dedicated Personal Adviser, who will build a trusted relationship with you, keeping in touch regularly and being your champion when you need one. We will support you to make informed choices about your present and future, as you get ready for independence.

# Governance structure and accountability

The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee provides strategic oversight and direction to enhance the wellbeing and outcomes of children under the care of Cambridgeshire County Council, as well as those who were formerly in care. The committee comprises elected members, key service leaders, and representatives from various service providers, including council officers and stakeholders from broader public services.

The primary role of the Governance Structure is to exercise leadership in advocating for the unique needs of children and young people who are currently or were previously looked after by the local authority. This involves collaboration with elected members, council officers, representatives from partner agencies, and direct engagement with children and young people.

The Governance Structure is committed to overseeing the activities of specific services, ensuring a unified, corporate approach across various council departments and agencies. The aim is to optimise resources and support for looked-after children, facilitating their access to a broad spectrum of services and maximising their potential for successful outcomes.



## To achieve this, all our work must be...

- **Trauma informed and relationship based**  
We are committed to understanding the impact of trauma and building consistent and trusted relationships with children, young people, and families.
- **Strengths orientated**  
We identify the strengths of children, young people and families and build on them to create positive change.
- **Outcome focused**  
We do whatever it takes to achieve the best outcome for children, young people, and families.
- **Whole family**  
We think about family in the widest sense in all the work we do.
- **Systemic approach**  
We work in partnership with both internal and external partners to get the right support for children, young people, and families at the right time.



**Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**  
Provides vision, strategy and performance accountability

**Children in Care Council**  
Vehicle for C&YP to have their say in planning, development and assurance of services they receive



**Children in Care Promise**  
Commitment to children in care and care leavers, reflected in strategic planning and commissioning by the council and partner agencies

**Care Leavers Network Voices**  
An opportunities for care leavers to access wider support, advice and have their say about services delivered to them



# What is good Corporate Parenting?

Has high aspirations for children and young people's achievements

A Committee that clearly understands its role and the responsibilities of the local authority towards looked after children and care leavers

Plans for and prioritising CIC needs, resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes

Actively engages with their young people – through children in care council and effective and regular links with senior management and elected members

Good partnership, commitment and collaboration by partner agencies to 'make things happen'

A good understanding and knowledge of the lived experience of children and young people and their carers

Demonstrates a strong dedication and commitment to children in care and care leavers

Robustly monitors children's progress and challenges outcomes

# Care leavers – Protected Characteristics

The Protected Characteristics motion, which was passed in Cambridgeshire in May 2023, ensures that people who are care experienced are protected and considered, across all services provided by that local authority.

This is already required by law for other groups who face potential discrimination because of their age, ethnicity, disability, or gender.

We appreciate the importance of this motion and will exercise our duties to ensure that our care leavers are treated with fairness. Our Corporate Parenting Steering Group will help drive this agenda as a whole council approach.





# Taking the strategy forward

The relationship between our priorities, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee, partners and local businesses, and the voices of our young people will support successful outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Each year, the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee will review various reports and updates to gain insight into the support given to our looked after children and young people.

They will analyse the reports based on the stated priorities, ensuring that Cambridgeshire's services are offering the best possible support for children and young people. Any specific areas requiring additional attention will be highlighted, always keeping the experiences of children and young people at the forefront of this process.



## Corporate Parenting Annual Report

Annually, the Corporate Parenting Board will generate a report offering a comprehensive overview of the accomplishments, advancements, and challenges encountered in addressing the needs of Cambridgeshire's looked after children and care leavers, whether placed within or outside the borough. This report will also outline the priorities for the upcoming year.

## Participation Annual Report

Annually, the Participation team will complete a report outlining the work that has been undertaken to hear the voice of our children and young people - to influence the service changes required to deliver a better care and support.

## Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

This report complements the Corporate Parenting Annual report by offering an overview of the looked after population. It highlights key successes and challenges while outlining plans for the upcoming years.

## Annual Health Report for Children in Care

This report details the provision of health services to children in care in Cambridgeshire. It assesses performance indicators, clinical activities conducted by the LAC Health team, service enhancements, and future development plans. The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee will have an opportunity to identify any emerging challenges on service delivery for children and young people and where necessary request further updates.

## The Virtual Head School Report for Children in Care

The Virtual School Annual Report offers the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee insights into the educational achievements, challenges, and overall wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers under the care of the Virtual School.

## Children Missing from Care Report

The report provides information on instances where children in care have gone missing. This report outlines details such as the number of occurrences, the duration of each incident, and any associated challenges. It provides an overview to understand and address issues related to children in care who are reported as missing, and the steps taken to safeguard them.

## Therapeutic Support Report from the Clinical team

Outlines the range of therapeutic services and support that is aimed at addressing the emotional, psychological, and behavioural needs of children and young people. This support is tailored to promote mental wellbeing, emotional resilience, and positive development.

## Foster Carers Charter

Evaluate the Foster Carer Charter, acknowledging the invaluable role played by foster carers in delivering exceptional care and support to our looked-after children in Cambridgeshire and ensure that carers feel listened to.

## Foster Carers Annual Report

The Foster Carers Annual Report provides an overview of the performance, achievements, and challenges within the fostering service over a specific period. It typically includes information about the number of foster carers, placements, training initiatives, support services, and any notable accomplishments or improvements made within the foster care system

## Sufficiency Strategy

This report outlines how the council will meet the sufficiency needs of homes for children within Cambridgeshire County Council.

## Foster Carers Statement of Purpose

Statement of Purpose is a document that outlines the aims, objectives, and functioning of a foster care service or an individual foster carer. It serves as a guide for prospective foster carers, social workers, and other key partners involved in the foster care process.

## Placement Stability Report

Provides analysis of the reasons behind placement changes (e.g., reunification, adoption, disruptions along with trends and patterns.

## Adoption Statement of Purpose

A report that provides comprehensive information about the adoption agency's goals, principles, and the services it offers in the context of adoption.

## Adoption Annual Report

The report provides a detailed overview of an adoption agency's activities, accomplishments, challenges, and statistics over the course of a year.

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

